Factors Contributing to Mentoring Effectiveness: An Empirical Study on Employees of Selected Indian IT Companies

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Introduction

Many people have benefited from more experienced managers or colleagues taking them under their wing and helping them to grow and make their way in the organization. Today in many organizations these people are not easy to find – de-layered , lean and complex matrix organization do not seem naturally to allow the time or often the right climate and structure. Yet the imperative of business improvement means that the need is stronger than ever for people to be effective quickly and to network across organizational boundaries. Research suggests that mentoring in the work place has proliferated as an intervention strategy for addressing the needs that people have for adult support and guidance throughout their development.

Literature review

The study of mentoring flourished in the 1990's and is still of great interest across many disciplines today. A variety of operational definitions pervade the mentoring literature; however, according to Levinson (1978), mentoring is one of the most important relationships a person can have early in their career and has been found to enhance the personal and professional development of individuals throughout their careers (e.g. Dalton, Thompson and Price, 1977; Kanter, 1977; Kram, 1980, 1985; Levinson, 1978; M.J. Lankau, 2002). It is not surprising, therefore, that organizations are increasingly using these relationships to improve individual and organizational effectiveness (Burke, McKeen and McKenna, 1993; Ragins, 1999), and to prepare and assist employees to face workplace changes (Allen and Poteet, 1999; Conway, 1995; Cordes and Gibson, 1996) and to Impact on leader efficacy development Paul et al (2011).

Indeed, Hagenow and McCrea (1994) consider it to be simply a modern term for a time-honored concept, and suggest that 'mentoring is first and foremost a teacher/student relationship'. In modern organizational context Shea (1995) defines this mentoring process as 'a developmental,

caring, sharing, helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how and effort in increasing and improving another person's growth, knowledge and skills'. Kizilos (1990) suggests that recent interest in mentoring systems in organizations was greatly stimulated by Collins and Scott's (1978) paper in the Harvard Business Review. Other contributions which have had a similar effect include those by Roche (1979), Levinson (1978), and Shapiro et al. (1978). Perhaps the most detailed research into the mentoring process, however, was that conducted by Kram (1980, 1983, 1985a). Her content analyses of in-depth interviews revealed that mentors carried out what she termed 'career functions' (e.g. sponsorship, coaching, protecting and introducing) and 'psycho-social functions' (e.g. role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling and friendship), findings largely confirmed by Olian et al. (1985), Noe (1988) and Scandura (1992), J. Fowler (2005). For the protégé, the resulting sense of competence and identity may lead to work success and effectiveness (Hunt and Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985b; Levinson, 1978; Noe, 1988; Roche, 1979; Wilbur, 1987; Zey, 1985), and career enhancement and advancement (Dreher and Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Hunt and Michael, 1983) and assist in developing beginning principles, instructional and leadership skills B. N. Martin (2010). For the mentor, there is the satisfaction and self-fulfillment received from observing the professional and personal development of a protégé (Burke et al.," 1994). Mentors may also benefit from organizational recognition of their relationships with protégés and the loyal support received from the protégés themselves.

Formal & informal mentorship have also been evaluated in terms of career outcomes & experiences. Informal mentorship is typically spontaneous relationship that is not formally recognized by the organization (Chos, walz, & Gardner, 1992; J .A. Steven, 2002). Alternatively, formal mentorships are programs that are managed and sanctioned by the organization. More specifically, informal and formal mentorships have been investigated along two mentoring dimensions: psychological support and career-related functions.

Indian IT Sector

As the internet became more central and important in the early 21st century and we now have a robust global, digital infrastructure. Most companies feel IT as driving business efficacy. It shapes and evolves innovative business models in the competitive era. A large portion of the organizations recognized in the literature as utilizing mentoring programs as a powerful HRD

strategy conduct business around the world and support mentoring programs in their organization. Examples include TCS, Infosys, Wipro, Accenture etc. These IT industries are likely to be ahead of the competition in various aspects, including the development of their Human resources. Various types of mentorship have proven successful; these provide a structure and help in maximizing opportunities for all employees.

Research Gap

There has been much research into the role of mentoring and the mentoring relationships and this research has made it possible to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of a mentoring program. Earlier research continue focusing on the roles that a mentor can take in any given relationship and on the difference between mentored and non-mentored employees, further delineating the categories of those formally, informally and non- mentored at all. The role of mentoring plays a particular interest in IT Corporation, yet research related to mentoring has not been focused on this population. Further this research attempts to fill another gap by the organizational antecedents and moderators that impact on the effectiveness of mentoring programs which is an underdeveloped/neglected aspect in the literature.

Objectives of Research

- To study and analyze contemporary mentoring practices in the Indian IT sector in order to measure its effectiveness.
- To find out antecedents, facilitating moderators, hindering factors and outcomes of mentoring programs.
- To measure the effectiveness of mentoring programs toward professional relationship, productivity, performance, skill, behavior and organizational development as a whole.
- To explore and analyze factors that contributes to enhancement of performance and skill.
- To develop a profile of suggestions for the organizations regarding new trends in mentoring.

Managerial Implication and scope of the research

The research will provide the researcher with an opportunity to interact with various employees working in the selected Indian IT organizations and gain practical insight into their mentoring

programs. It will provide the knowledge of contemporary mentoring practices as well as new trends in mentoring to the researchers and practitioners both. The research can be used as a source of information for the selected industry. It helps management for gaining and retaining human resources in the competitive and dynamic environment where everyday new challenges have emerged and organization has to overcome them for its survival. It can also be used for academic purpose in the field of research. Future researcher can conduct similar type of study in other sectors by taking other variables into consideration.

Research Methodology

This section elaborates the research methods and procedures that will be used in this study.

Variables under study

Dependent variable: Outcomes (personal& professional and organizational)

Independent variable: Antecedents of mentoring programs

Moderating variable: Hindering and facilitating factors of Mentoring

Research Design

Type of research : Empirical research

Data Type : Primary data & Secondary data

Primary data shall contain questionnaire from the program coordinator and the secondary data shall contain company's annual reports, articles and websites.

Research instrument : Open and Close-ended Questionnaire

Research tool : Factor analysis and Multiple Regression analysis.

Sampling Design

Sampling technique : Simple Random Sampling

Population and Sample: The population of interest for this study shall involve Indian IT companies. They have funding to support a corporate sponsored mentoring program. Several companies within this population have been cited in mentoring literature. A sample

size of approx 200 IT professionals from select companies shall be taken.

Hypothesis:

H1: There is significant relationship between different antecedents and effectiveness of mentoring programs.

H2: There is significant relationship between different moderating factors and effectiveness of mentoring programs.

H3: There is significant relationship between different outcomes and effectiveness of mentoring programs.

Study Plan

Study plan has been divided into five chapters

Chapter I:

This chapter shall be an introductory one containing definitions, theoretical background about Mentoring programs and their antecedents and outcomes in the organisations.

Chapter II:

Literature review focusing on past research about the different mentoring practices and conceptual frameworks. This chapter shall include antecedents, moderators, facilitating factors and outcomes at individual and organizational level. It shall also include mentoring types, different models of successful mentoring, and phases of mentoring relationships.

Chapter III:

This chapter shall include profile of selected companies and their different models of successful mentoring programs.

Chapter IV:

Discussions about the research methodologies implemented. It includes objectives and hypothesis of the study, selection of sample, collection of data; questionnaire, specifications of the variables.

Chapter V:

Data interpretation and findings.

Chapter VI:

This chapter brings out the conclusions, implications, limitations and further scope of the research.

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